

VZCZCXRO8677

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN  
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHBW #0587/01 1651511  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 131511Z JUN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0044  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0003  
RHEHNS/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RXFEAA/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRADE 000587

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [SR](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: SERBS WILL ANSWER UN SYG BAN'S LETTER WITH A "SOFT NO" ON  
SUNDAY, JUNE 15

#### SUMMARY

1. (SBU) President Tadic will likely respond on June 15 with a "soft no" to UN SYG Ban's letter on UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) reconfiguration. Prime Minister Kostunica has already responded publicly, calling the Ban proposal unacceptable for Serbia. Kosovo Minister Samardzic publicly said UN SYG Ban had overstepped his mandate and that Serbia would respond in accordance with its Kosovo policy. End Summary.

#### Tadic's Response

2. (SBU) Foreign Minister Jeremic told Ambassador on June 12 that he had advised President Tadic to answer UN SYG Ban's letter outlining the reconfiguration of UNMIK with a "soft no" on Sunday, June 15. Jeremic said that the text of the letter Tadic has tasked him with drafting will emphasize Serbia's commitment to stability in Kosovo, willingness to work with the UN and European Union (and acknowledging the important role to be played by the EU Rule of Law Mission - EULEX), and interest in discussing with all parties practical mechanisms to ensure cooperation and safety for all people living in Kosovo. But, he added, the letter will end with an insistence that such a way forward be blessed by the UN Security Council -- that is, with a rejection of Ban's actions unless they are agreed upon in New York.

3. (SBU) Jeremic explained that he had just come from a meeting with Tadic, at which Tadic had thrown an ashtray at him -- not, Jeremic said, because of the content of the letter from the SYG, which Jeremic admitted was not unacceptable to the Serbs, but rather, because of Tadic's frustration with the SYG. Tadic had called Ban and pleaded for 40 minutes for a delay in the delivery of Ban's letter, but to no avail. Tadic had sought the delay in order to complete his formation of a new government which, Jeremic claimed, would be clearly pro-European and thus more flexible in its approach to Kosovo issues. Now, in the middle of very tense government formation negotiations, Tadic was faced with the letter and had to respond. Jeremic claimed he had been able to talk Tadic out of making an immediate (angry) response, and that despite efforts by hard-line nationalists in the government like Kosovo Minister Samardzic, Jeremic would likely be able to delay the response until Tadic returned from a trip to Athens (Tadic departs Friday June 13 and returns Sunday June 15). Jeremic said he and Samardzic had been charged with drafting the response to be presented to the President, and that he would ensure that it would not be complete until the President returned to Belgrade.

#### Upcoming Events

14. (SBU) Jeremic noted that the EU had scheduled senior-level meetings during the week of June 16, and it would be important that Serbia come across to the EU as cooperative, even as it must protect its legal and diplomatic commitment to its territorial integrity. Jeremic said it was his understanding that the United States has planned a meeting of the UN Security Council on Friday, June 20, and asked that the United States consider delaying that meeting until Tadic had formed a government. Ambassador answered that USUN had not informed him of any such meeting scheduled for June 20, and that Tadic should simply form his new government regardless of any potential meeting of the UNSC.

EU Gets Same Message from Jeremic  
-----

15. (SBU) Ambassador left the meeting with Jeremic only to run into Peter Sorenson, a senior EU representative in Belgrade, who was on his way in to see the Foreign Minister. Sorenson later confirmed to Ambassador that Jeremic had given him the same message: the Serbs would answer the Ban letter with a "soft no" on Sunday, June 15.

DSS Response  
-----

16. (SBU) The UN SYG proposal was contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and as such could not be accepted by Serbia, Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said in a brief statement to Tanjug News Agency on June 12. He said that the Serbian Parliament had adopted a resolution in December 2007 which stated that the deployment of EULEX to implement the Ahtisaari plan would undermine Serbia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and the Serbian Constitution.

17. (SBU) Serbian Kosovo Minister Slobodan Samardzic said at a June

BELGRADE 00000587 002 OF 002

13 press conference that UN SYG Ban had overstepped his competencies in planning to reconfigure UNMIK. Serbia could not allow the UN SYG "to smuggle in" the EULEX mission "through the back door," Samardzic said. He said President Tadic, together with the technical government would prepare a response in accordance to the government's current Kosovo policy.

Comment  
-----

18. (SBU) Asking for delays for domestic political reasons is Tadic's trademark. The Ban letter and Serbia's reply are unlikely to affect government formation at this advanced stage. End  
Comment.

MUNTER